

The body of the Mandurah bird was retrieved and is preserved as a study skin at the W.A. Museum (No. A9210). Its particulars are: ♀, weight, 72 gm.; length, 345 mm.; wing, 251; tail, 144; culmen, 28.2; tarsus, 15; middle toe and claw, 23.

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.

Travels of a Ringed Wedge-tailed Eagle and a White-faced Heron.—On June 20, 1963, a young Wedge-tailed Eagle (*Aquila audax*) was caught taking lambs from a farm property at Coomberdale. It was trapped and transferred to the C.S.I.R.O. Division of Wildlife Research laboratory at Nedlands for repair of an injured foot and subsequent release in a less inhabited area.

The eagle's foot healed well and the bird was taken to Karra-gullen on June 29, 1963, for release, bearing C.S.I.R.O. band No. 150-01210. On the ninth day after release, July 8, the young bird was shot and killed on a property just east of Beverley. This represents a flight of fifty odd miles direct in a due easterly direction in eight full days of freedom after a period of captivity.

Of greater surprise were the flight details of a four-month-old White-faced Heron (*Ardea novae-hollandiae*) earlier this year (1963). The heron had fallen from its nest in Cloverdale in October 1962, when approximately two weeks old. It was hand-raised in Dalkeith. On January 3, 1963, bearing C.S.I.R.O. band No. 100-02112, the young bird, healthy and of normal appearance, was transported to Northam for release by the Mortlock River. Since it had previously been maintained in a long enclosure which was too low-roofed to allow free flight, the release at Northam represented the bird's first real attempt at flying.

Upon the opening of the cage door the heron demonstrated immediate prowess in good, strong flight, and was left at the river with a pair of adult White-faced Herons in the near vicinity. Food in the form of *Gambusia* was abundant in the large pools the drying river had left.

On January 6, 1963, exactly three days later, the young heron flew into a householder's garden just south of Darlington and proceeded to harry the fish in an ornamental pond. Being relatively tame the bird was caught easily by a young boy, the C.S.I.R.O. was notified and we immediately collected the heron, which was lively and in perfect condition.

Thus, in three days, on its first flight, this heron had covered a distance of 45 miles in the direction of its birthplace, a south-westerly flight from an area with which it was absolutely unacquainted. The bird was later released at Coolup, still bearing band 100-02112, and flew off in the company of about 40 resident White-faced Herons.

—C. A. NICHOLLS, Nedlands

Probable Seed Reproduction in the Orchid, *Pterostylis vittata*.—Though the pollination mechanisms of terrestrial orchids are extraordinarily elaborate and seed is set freely, attempts at germination by horticulturists are almost always doomed to failure. A deter-

mined experiment at solving this problem was made by O. H. Sargent, but without success (*W. Aust. Nat.*, 4: 44). It seems to be commonly held that in nature "the reproduction of terrestrial species is largely carried on by multiplication of the root tubers" (Mrs. E. H. Pelloe, *West Australian Orchids*: 5) but that reproduction must at times take place direct from seed is evident from various circumstantial evidence. It may be worth reporting the following case.

On June 27, 1953, Mr. I. C. Carnaby took me to a locality in the bush at Bailup where he had found greenhood orchids growing in a hollow within the broken-off top of a wandoo (*Eucalyptus redunca*), 20 ft. above the ground. There were six flowering plants at the time and two in bud. Mr. Carnaby said they would grow to about 2 ft. in height. The soil in the hollow was leaf mould and the "earth" from termite workings. A specimen collected at the time was later determined by Mr. A. S. George as the Banded Greenhood, *Pterostylis vittata*.

It seems hardly likely that the orchid could have grown in the tree hollow in any other way than from seed transported there, perhaps by wind.

I referred the foregoing note to several botanists and none knew of any person who has actually raised seedlings of any of our native ground orchids, though, of course, the epiphytic species are very easy to cultivate by these means. Mr. J. H. Willis, of the National Herbarium, Melbourne, stated: "It is quite certain that reproduction from seed often takes place naturally. I am thinking of a colony of *Spiranthes sinensis* that suddenly appeared on a swampy silt flat at Creswick, Victoria, in January 1961, where none had ever existed previously. Experience of members in our Native Plants Preservation Society of Victoria indicates that most terrestrials will die out within 5 or 6 years unless they are able to produce seedlings—tubers become successively weaker year by year. In Victorian fern gullies it is not uncommon to find vigorous colonies of such normally terrestrial orchids as *Pterostylis pedunculata*; *Corybas dilatatus*, *Chiloglottis gunnii* and *C. cornuta* growing epiphytically on the trunks of tree-ferns to a height of 8 or 10 ft. I have also noted the last species on the rotted decking of a forest bridge. Such plants could only have originated from airborne seed."

Mrs. Rica Erickson likewise has only indirect evidence of seed reproduction. On July 7, 1950, at Bolgart she found a colony of seedling rosettes adjacent to a mature flowering specimen of *Pterostylis hamiltoni*. There were dozens of seedlings appearing in lines where the earth had cracked in summer time; some of the tiny plants were quite loose and could be lifted from the soil without root damage—there were no tubers. Mrs. Erickson recalls being shown by the late Colonel B. T. Goadby numerous plants of a *Prasophyllum*, growing on his lawn at Mosman Park. None had been there before and Colonel Goadby thought the seed must have fallen from a carpet from his room which had been taken there to be cleaned.

—D. L. SERVENTY, Nedlands.